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Dürer's Roman
Alphabet

THE CONSTRUCTION OF ROMAN LETTERS BY ALBRECHT DÜRER

Dunster House : Cambridge

1924

UPB

PRINTER'S NOTE

THE Roman alphabet constructed by Albrecht Dürer "for the guidance of architects, painters and others" first appeared in Book III. of his treatise on geometry, "Underweysung der Messung mit dem Zirckel und Richtscheyt," published at Nuremberg in 1525. It has been re-engraved and reprinted several times with the text in various languages.

As "inscriptions on lofty walls" still play an important but not always a very happy part in our public buildings and memorials, to say nothing of the other manifold uses to which letters are put by designers, decorators and printers, "it will," to quote Dürer again, "make for the merit of the work that they form the letters correctly." . . . "Wherefore I hope

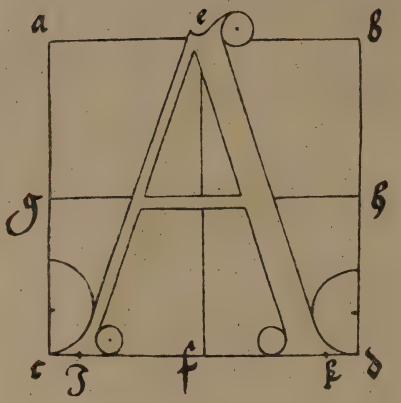
that no wise man will defame this laborious task of mine, since with good intent & in behoof of all who love the Liberal Arts have I undertaken it: nor for painters alone, but for goldsmiths too, and for sculptors, and stonecutters, and woodcarvers, & for all, in short, who use compass & rule and measuring line—that it may serve to their utility."

The designs themselves clearly show the construction of each letter without need of reference to Dürer's text which, to tell the truth, is in some places not very lucid.

The letters on the following pages are printed from process blocks made by Emery Walker from a copy of the *editio princeps* in the British Museum. They served to illustrate the English translation of the treatise printed in 1917 for The Grolier Club of New York, and it

is with the Club's courteous permission that they are used again here. Variants of the letters K, M, R and X have been omitted.

B. R.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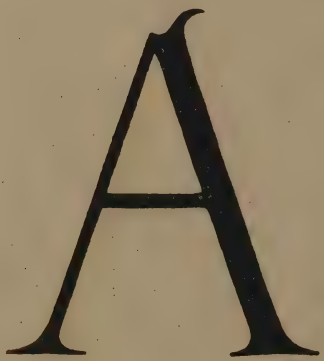

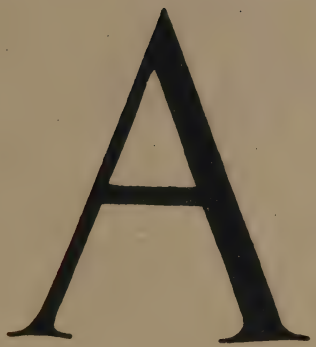

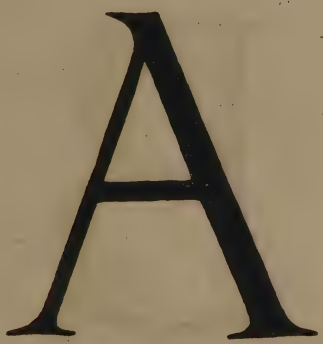

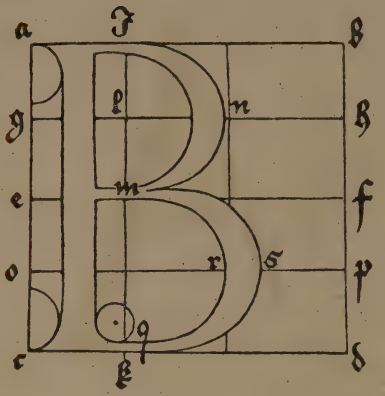

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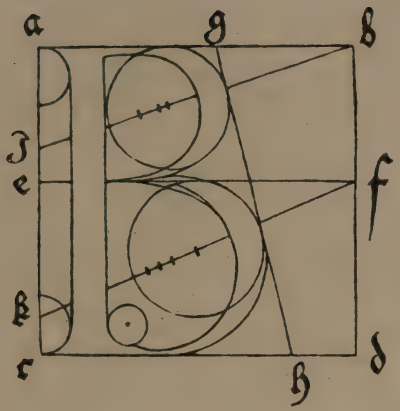

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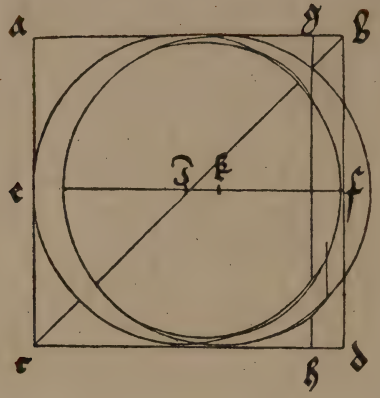

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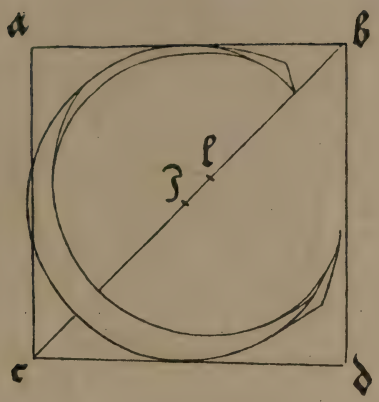
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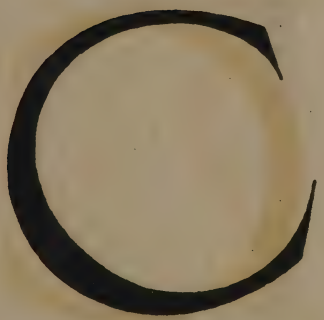

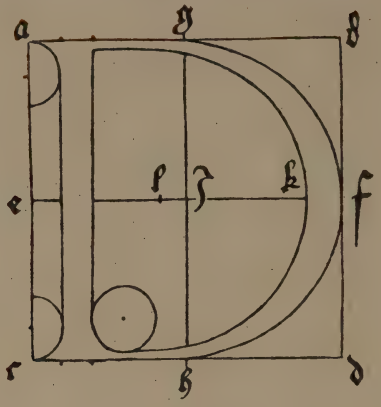

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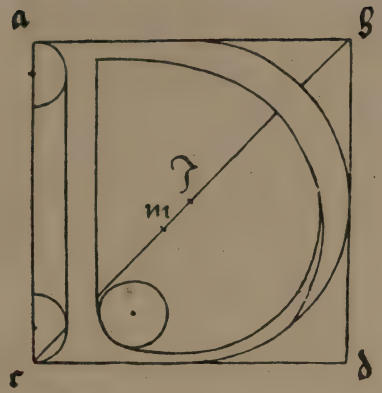

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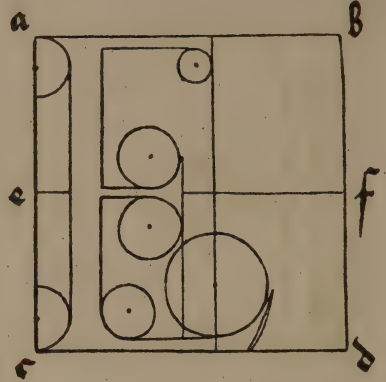

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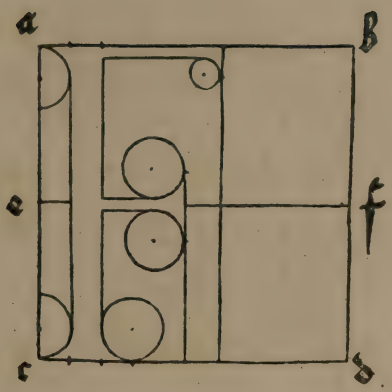

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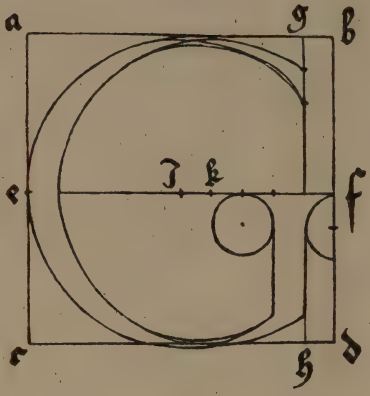

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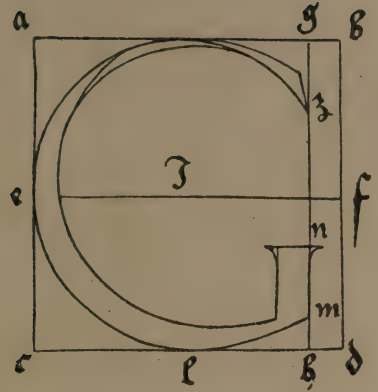
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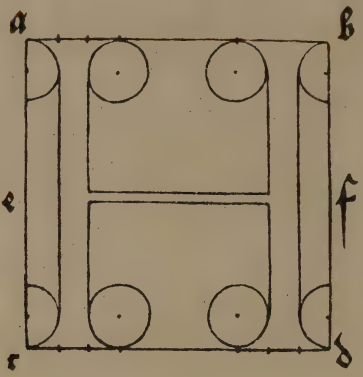

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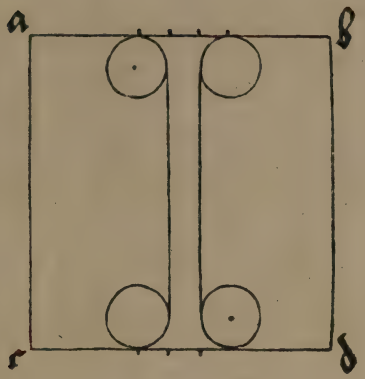

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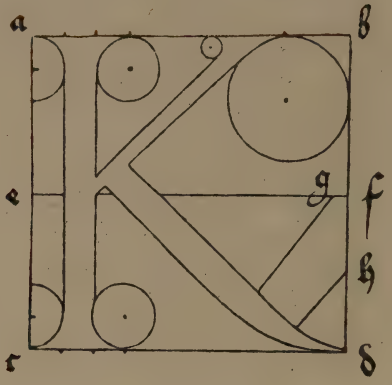

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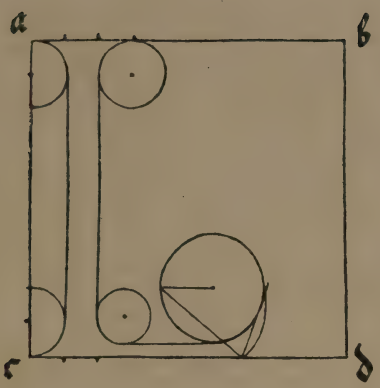

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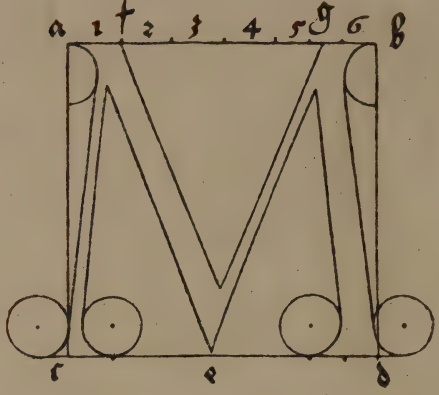

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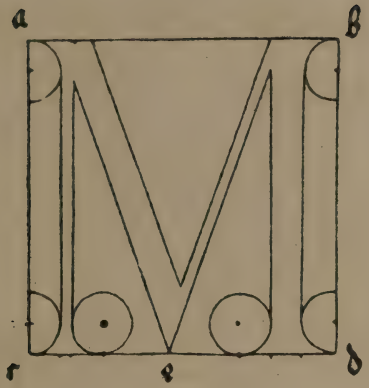

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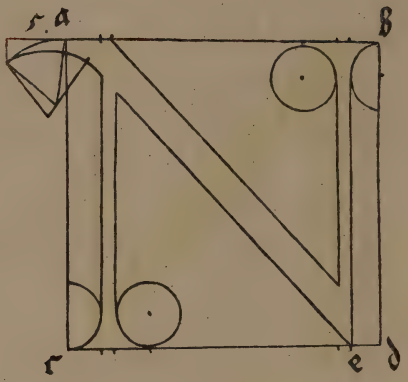

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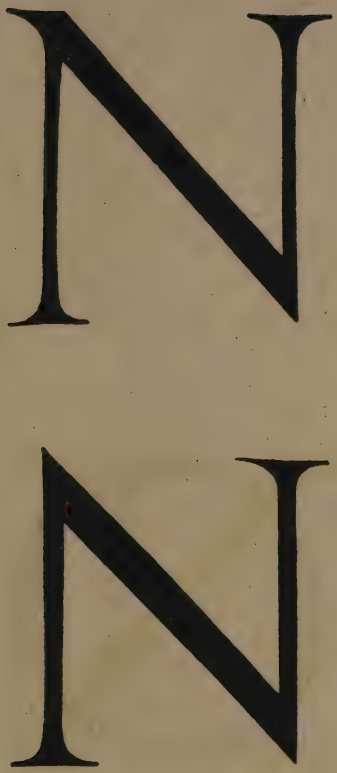

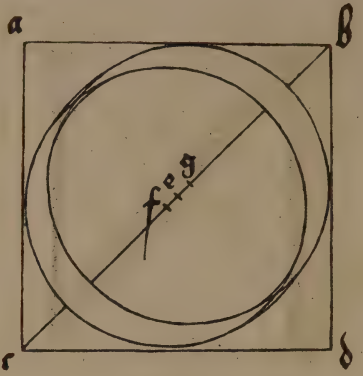
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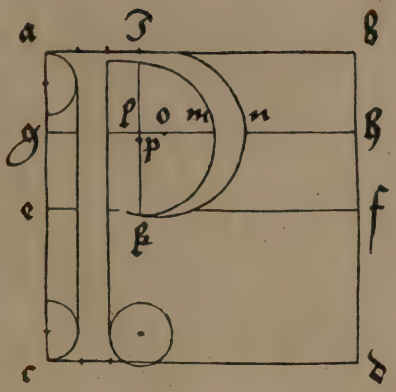

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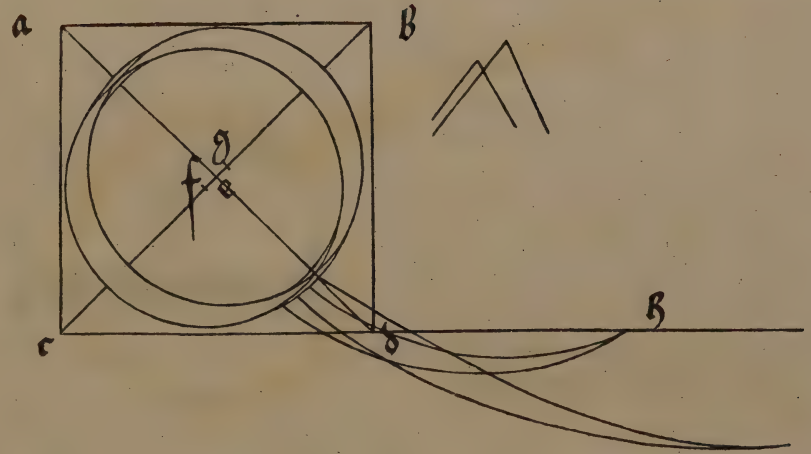
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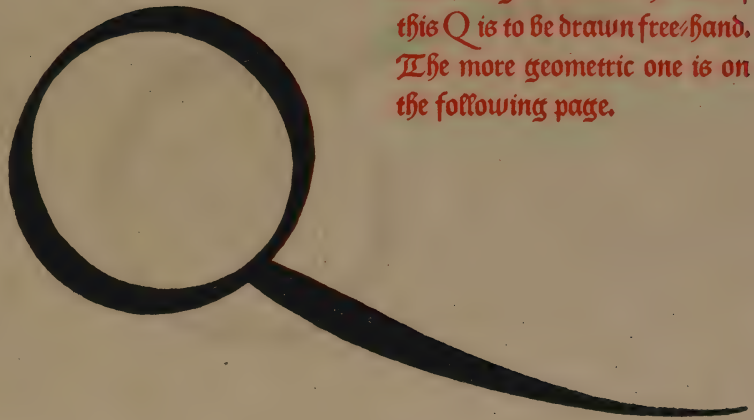
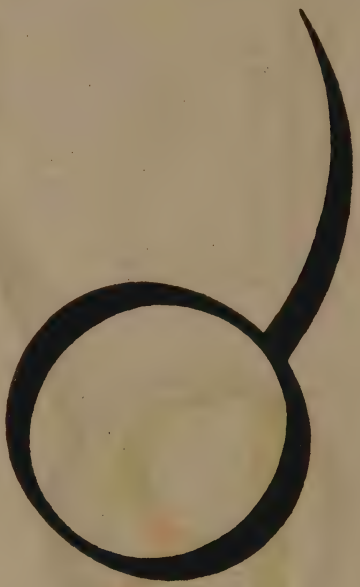
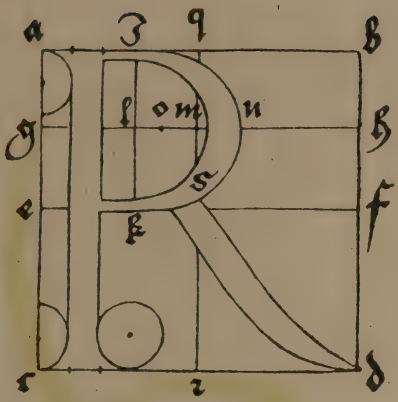


According to Dürer the tail of this Q is to be drawn free-hand. The more geometric one is on the following page.





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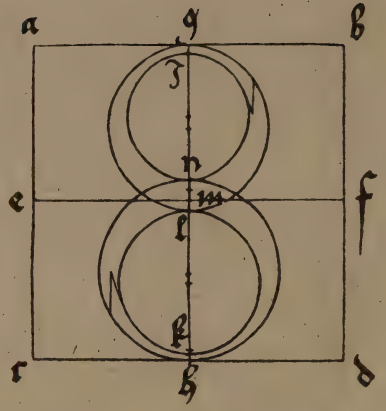

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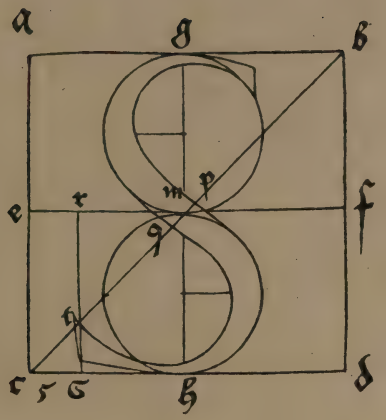

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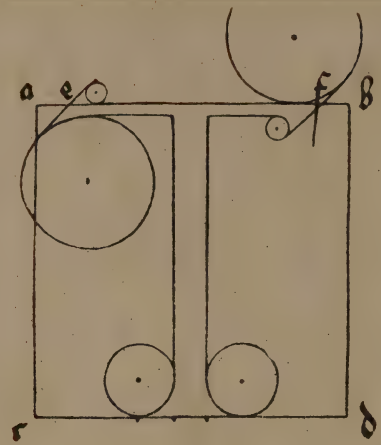

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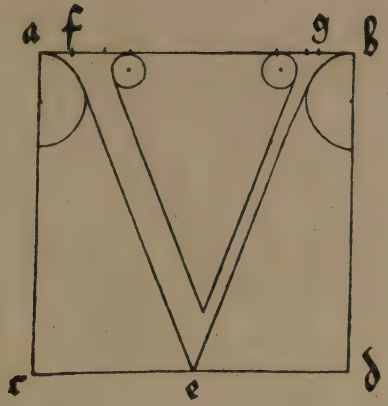

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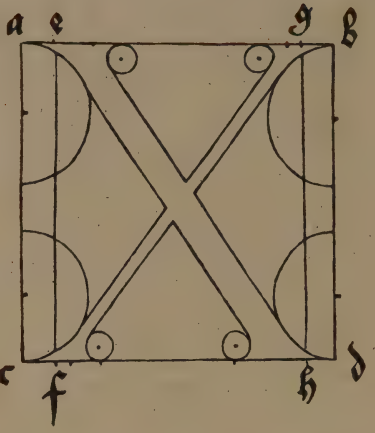

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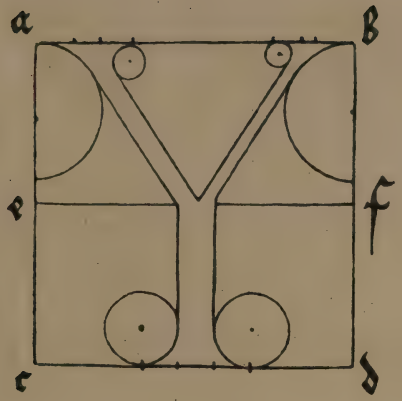

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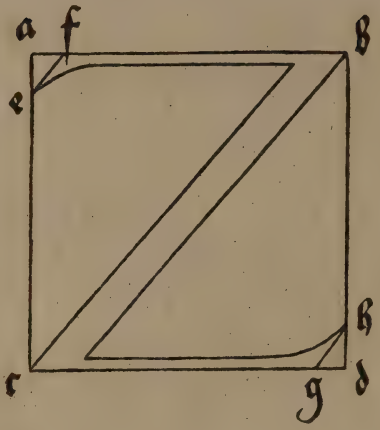
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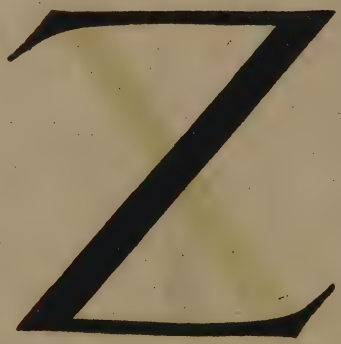

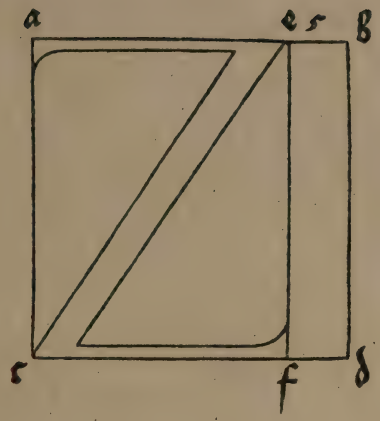

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